which has a strong resemblance to sleeping sickness. (1) One of its

1. It is not sleeping sickness itself, however, for that disease seems formerly to have been unknown in this area.

symptoms is a weakness of the lower limbs. Instances are cited of individuals who were unable to resist their passions and were punished in this manner. Apparently only the woman dies. As soon as her family discovers that she is stricken, the guilty woman denounces her accomplice. The latter is held responsible and is required to pay a heavy indemnity, which may amount to several dozen copper rings.

Here as in many other situations the Nkundó have found a way to avoid the danger. There is an antidote (nsengó), and it is water (bàsi bale nsengó éá bombilé). Thus those who are unable to control their aroused passions during the day, satisfy it in a shallow stream.

The fear of bombilé has been greatly shaken [93] by colonization. If we are to believe the natives, foreign soldiers are responsible for this change also. But the behavior of the latter could not completely destroy the ancient feeling, probably due to a natural shame which makes them seek darkness and privacy for acts of this sort.

After intercourse a native woman usually gives herself a douche. She does so for the sake of cleanliness. It often happens, however, that she does not wait long enough before doing so, and thus she neutralises the effect of the intercourse. This is chiefly a matter of carelessness. Nevertheless, under certain circumstances she may use this means to prevent conception. (1)

1. See Chapter X, Article I, 2.

According to my informants, some women have constitutional abnormalities which repel men. As everything readily becomes public, such flaws are quickly known after marriage, though not quite as readily beforehand. Actually love can -- and often does -- cause them to be overlooked. But after the first ardor has cooled, such a situation may become a threat to the stability of a marriage. When quarrels

833 become somewhat violent, the women recall these flaws, to the
826 great shame of the person who suffers from them. The same is true of the weakness of some of the men which, like an excess of sexual activity, can cause difficulties in a household.

2. Rape

839 Rape in the true sense of the word -- that is, the abuse of a woman by the use of violence -- is most unusual among the Nkundó. If a woman does not consent, the angry seducer leaves her, often insulting her to the best of his ability. I know of only one case of rape, which occurred some time ago and caused much consternation in the region. Banfingá, the daughter of Iloko [94] Is'Efekele of Lofelf (Bongfli), was at that time living with her mother's clan the Bonyeka (Bonkoso). She had not yet fully attained physical maturity (her breasts were still very small). One day she went into the forest and did not return in the evening. The family was alarmed, and her father and her uncle Mpénda éa Nkotonkale went to look for her. Finding traces of fresh blood, they followed them till they found Banfingá's corpse buried in the nsusulu. She had died of hemorrhage; her sex organs, torn, showed the unmistakable signs of rape. People had their suspicions, but it has never been possible to prove the identity of the criminal. If there had been proof, he would not have escaped the mortal vengeance of the unfortunate victim's parents.

All the data I have been able to collect indicates that other instances must undoubtedly have occurred.

3. Incomplete acts

832 Here we are speaking of what moralists call actus impudicitiae, that is, acts whose nature physically leads to sexual pleasure.

Obscene bodily contacts between persons of opposite sex are preparatory acts which excite; even touching the breasts, the abdomen, and taking a person by the arms are included in this category.

593x 606 578 We should add that in some households, difficulties arise rather easily during the visits of parents or parents-in-law, because of the sensibilities, incompatibility of character, or discontent of one party who may consider the other guilty of discourtesy, lack of delicacy, disrespect, or stinginess toward the visiting parents. The same is true for the rearing of children. [273]

4. Punishments

593x 578 Nkundó law permits a husband to inflict corporeal punishment (bikĭnjwĭ, sing. ekĭnjwĭ) on his wife, its nature varying with the seriousness of the case. Obviously these sanctions, expressly permitted by law, cannot give rise to claims on the woman's part [576] or result in the obligation to pay a bondo. [Editor's note: Unless, of course, the husband -- acting in excess of his rights -- is more violent than the occasion warrants for under such conditions, the wife, supported by her family, attacks the husband, who is then [618] forced to acknowledge the harm he has done and make reparation by means of a bondo.] If she is hurt she may claim a supplementary payment called liombo (from the verb bomba) or "bandage" (for the wound); it consists of 5 rings or more, depending on the situation. [626] The loss or breaking of a tooth is considered a serious injury. For this is a real injury to the woman and, in the case of front teeth, to her beauty. (1) Of course, as explained above, the wife will first have

[304] 1. Because they are filed, the incisors are much less resistant than normal teeth. Teeth filing is practiced for reasons of beauty.

run home, and it is there that the dispute is examined.

593x 578 469 For the sake of a clearer understanding, let us go into a few details concerning the penal stipulations of Nkundó law in relation to the life of a married couple.

Usually, in a simple domestic quarrel, the couple does no more than tell each other some home truths, seasoning their speeches

§96 §97 taking the child would cause the child's death. The same precaution is also in order if the husband goes on a trip before the child's birth and does not return till after the delivery

§96 §97 We have just seen that the harmful effects of the father's misconduct on his child's life is effectuated through the father's act of taking the child on his knees. Thus the Nkundó speak of bɔ́ŋgɔ́ b'ábé, "a father's bad knees," to indicate his reprehensible conduct, and they say that the bondandota potion is administered to the child so that it will not die because of the father's bad knees. (1) [§14]

1. The expression bɔ́ŋgɔ́ b'ábé is also used when an undertaking which requires continence is unsuccessful. (See Article II, 3).

§53 §54 §89 When a child has painful and persistent diarrhea, it is often interpreted as the effect of the father's infidelity. As soon as they become aware of it, the couple separate for some time, and the father no longer touches the child. [492]

§53 §54 §89 Contrary to what one reads on this subject about other peoples of the Congo, Nkundó couples do not have to remain continent beyond the period of seclusion. The separation ceremony gives the husband back the freedom of action he had before his wife's pregnancy. For the wife the boloka remains strict with respect to illicit relations until the child is weaned. However she, too, may regain her freedom by having recourse to an antidote, the ingredients of which she purchases from a person who holds the secret. The ingredients are placed in a small antelope horn which is then stopped up by means of boloká (resin from the Symphonia gabonensis). The interested party wears it about her loins on a string or a bead belt or, preferably, on a special creeper. This amulet protects the child's life from the harmful influence of the mother's acts of adultery, but it does so only on condition that she does not separate herself from the child, as we will explain further on. This procedure [§29]